



SEAT PLEASANT NEWS

FEBRUARY 2013 EDITION Visit us on the web at: www.seatpleasantmd.gov

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City of Seat Pleasant

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Council President

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(At-Large Councilmember)

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Robert L. Ashton

Treasurer

Robert L. Ashton

Chief of Police

Chris Cotillio

Director of Public Works

Johnny Thompson

City Clerk

Dashaun Lanham

MAYOR'S MESSAGE



Last month our nation honored the life, legacy and love of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We did so, not so much in honor of the man himself but of his works and principles of redemption, reconciliation and the promotion of the Beloved Community. We are ever thankful for the sacrifice and commitment of his service to humanity.

I thought about how the men who established this nation wrote in the preamble to the Constitution "We the people, of the United States, in order to establish **a more perfect union...**" We all know that the beginning period of this new nation was far from being perfect just as it is today. The people who formed this nation did so to escape the tyranny of Great Britain, to ultimately become tyrants themselves unfortunately. A Civil War was fought over the question of slavery. Once that war was over, a more internal conflict was realized over the system of the Black Codes, and Jim Crow laws.

However, there have always been people who have fought for a more just society a more perfect union. We have always had the remnant of courageous men and women who have persevered to establish what the founding fathers called **a more perfect union**. Many others have fought using different methods around the world. They have taken up arms to violently fight for their causes. Even between infamous families like the Hatfield's and the McCoy's; violent methods were used to resolve conflicts among them. However, today we amplify the methods of Dr. Martin Luther King's philosophy of non-violence in resolving conflict which will move us, as American citizens closer to becoming **a more perfect union**.

Here in Seat Pleasant many of us are working to secure the blessings of freedom, democracy and **a more perfect union** through our commitment of service to one another and our community. The City Council and I seek to improve the quality of our service, the continued training of our personnel and investments in better equipment to help carry out our various functions to better serve you. This is not utopia and we do not claim to be however each day we work collectively to do our best to become a better community and move toward becoming a part of being **a more perfect union**.

As we continue our discussion about Dr. King, I invite your attention to the principles and philosophy of Dr. King. Dr. King envisioned what he called a Beloved Community. His study, research and work were and are still critical pieces to move toward **a more perfect union**. His life and sacrifice is more than an emblematic symbol of peace and reconciliation. It is however, a wonderful demonstration of love, peace and understanding that proved to be just and correct. The evidence of his work is seen when now more than ever before black men and women are integrated into the context of the greater society; so much so that we have celebrated for the second time the inauguration of a Black man to serve as our nation's president. His vision of judging one on the content of their character and not the color of their skin is becoming more of a reality each year.

While we celebrate this historic fact we still have a long way to go. Yes, there are still issues of racism, bias, and prejudice that still exist within our society. But we have problems within our own community that must be addressed. The violence that is perpetrated among our own people must end. The mean and evil spirit of hatred that perme-

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(MAYOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED)

ates the minds of some of our brothers and sisters must be eradicated. The violent resolution of conflict within families, communities and organizations must stop. We must find peaceful means to solve our problems. The spirit of violence must be removed from our psyche and uprooted from our philosophy. Violence is not and has never been the answer to resolve our issues. Neighbors must communicate their concerns to one another in a more congenial and humanistic manner.

So-called gang wars must **stop**. Fighting on the basketball court and football fields must **stop**. Bullying within our schools must **stop**. Domestic violence must **stop**. Police brutality must **stop**. Throwing flammable liquids on people and setting them on fire must **stop**. Shooting and stabbing of one another must **stop**. We cannot go from hangings to homicides. We cannot go from being beaten by racist people to beating one another. Our conflicts must be resolved differently.

Dr. King's philosophy was heartfelt and real and not a fantasy. He did not see this Beloved Community as a romantic drama acted out upon a stage. His thoughts were not some fictional adaptation of a great novel. But he believed in the human spirit and the capacity of good in all to do good. He believed in the power of reconciliation which could destroy the cycle of retributive violence. He believed in "agape" love which he described as "understanding, redeeming goodwill for all," an "overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless and creative"..."the love of God operating in the human heart."

To that end, we embrace the Beloved Community by identifying our community as *A City of Excellence*. Our manner of communication and behavior must reflect excellence at all times because we **ARE** an **excellent** people. The way we treat one another must be **excellent**. The way we see one another must be **excellent**. The way we see ourselves must be **excellent**. The way we see our community must be **excellent**. Doing this, we fulfill Dr. King's vision of a Beloved Community and thus we subsequently create what our founding fathers envisioned **A More Perfect Union** and what we affectionately call *A City of Excellence*.

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK



The City Council has introduced the following legislation in the month of January.

Ordinance O-13-08

Ordinance O-13-08 AN ORDINANCE concerning CITY OF SEAT PLEASANT PURCHASING REQUIREMENTS

FOR the purpose of amending the Code of the City of Seat Pleasant, Chapter 39 "Purchasing," Article I "Competitive Bidding" to clarify or revise certain purchasing and competitive bidding provisions; providing that the title to this Ordinance constitutes a fair summary of this Ordinance; and otherwise generally relating to the amendments contemplated by this Ordinance.

Copies of legislation are available from the Office of the City Clerk at:

City Hall
6301 Addison Road
Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743-2125

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Mayor and City Council will meet on the following days in the month of February.

Monday, February 4, 2013
Regular Work Session
Time: 6:00p.m.

Monday, February 11, 2013
Public Session
Time: 7:00p.m.

The meetings will be held at: Seat Pleasant City Hall Council Chambers
6301 Addison Road
Seat Pleasant, MD 20743-2125

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(OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK - MESSAGE CONTINUED)

If you desire to speak before the Council at the Public Session, please contact the City Clerk to register your concerns before the meeting.

Publication Mailing: The Gazette Newspaper has discontinued the FREE home delivery of the paper to each resident in the City of Seat Pleasant. However, they have expanded the bulk delivery services to the following locations:

Seat Pleasant City Hall
6301 Addison Road
Seat Pleasant, MD 20743

Safeway Stores, Inc.
6300 Central Avenue
Seat Pleasant, MD 20743

Seat Pleasant Activity Center
5720 Addison Road
Seat Pleasant, MD 20743

Fairmount Heights Public Library
5904 Kolb St.
Fairmount Heights, MD 20743

COUNCILMEMBER SIMMS APPOINTED TO NLC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE



Councilmember Elenora Simms has been appointed to the National League of Cities (NLC) 2013 Human Development Steering Committee. This Committee has the lead responsibility for developing NLC federal policy positions on issues involving social services, children and learning, poverty and income support, employment and workforce development, equal opportunity, Social Security and seniors, individuals with disabilities, public health care, mental health parity, and immigration reform. The appointment was announced by NLC President Marie Lopez Rogers, Mayor, Avondale, Arizona.

As a member of the committee, *Councilmember Simms* will play a key role in shaping NLC's policy positions, while advocating on behalf of America's cities and towns on Capitol Hill, with the Administration, and at home.

The chair of this year's Human Development Committee is Mary Dorothy La Marche, Vice Mayor, Farragut, TN. Serving as this year's vice chairs are Van R. Johnson, II, Mayor Pro Tem, Savannah, GA and Vicki Welch, Council Member, Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Government.

For more information on NLC's other committees and councils, visit <http://www.nlc.org/influence-federal-policy/policy-committees>.

The National League of Cities is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans.

HOMEOWNER'S TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

by Robert L. Ashton, Acting City Administrator and City Treasurer

The State of Maryland Homeowners' Property Tax Credit Program



The Homeowners' Tax Credit Program provides credits against State and local real property for homeowners who qualify based on a sliding scale of property tax liability and income. The Homeowners Tax Credit Program is a State funded program, where the State reimburses local governments for the cost of the tax credit against local property. This program was initiated in 1975, was originally limited to homeowner's age 60 and older and homeowners with disabilities. This program was expanded to homeowners of all ages in 1978. The last change to the tax credit program occurred in 2004. This legislative initiative changed the Property Tax Credit to bring it in line with inflationary increases in property

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(HOMEOWNER TAX CREDITS CONTINUED)

values since 1998. It is worth pointing out that according to Maryland State Department of Taxation and Assessment only 165 residents currently participate in this program. An additional 70 Seat Pleasant residents are eligible for the Homeowners' Property Tax Credit at a net savings of \$610 per resident. The State of Maryland's Property Tax Credit Program is 100% supported by State of Maryland.

The Homeowners' Property Tax Applications will available on April 1, 2013. The deadline for submitting the Application is September 1, 2013. The Homeowners' Property Tax Credit Eligibility application can be completed one of three ways listed below:

By Mailing the application to the address below

By Using the online Homeowners' Property Tax Credit Application (Application online is due September 1, 2013).

By Printing and mailing the pdf application on the State Department of Assessment and Taxation web site <http://www.dat.state.md.us>

The State of Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation mailing address is:

Department of Assessment and Taxation
Homeowners' Tax Credit Program
301 West Preston Street
Baltimore Maryland 21201

The State of Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation web site is: <http://www.dat.state.md.us>

The State of Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation phone number is: 410-767-4433.

If you have any questions please contact Robert L. Ashton City Treasurer 301/336-2600 extension 2230.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT SEEKS RESIDENTS' HELP

RESIDENTS CAN HELP IN INCLEMENT WEATHER



During the winter months, fire hydrants and catch basins must be kept free of snow and ice. This ensures the safety of your neighborhood during an emergency. It can take several days or even longer to remove snow near fire hydrants and from catch basins. Covered catch basins, whether from leaves or snow, can result in major flooding to your street and property. We are asking residents to help by clearing the snow from fire hydrants and catch basins near your house.

DURING THE CITY'S SNOW REMOVAL OPERATION REMEMBER:

- Any vehicle parked in such a way as to impede fire or ambulance travel, or snowplow and sanding operations will be towed. If you are in doubt about whether it is safe to park on the street, use this rule of thumb: If it is snowing, we will be sanding; if there is more than 3" of accumulation, we will be plowing. Please try not to park on the street.
- When shoveling please don't put the snow back into the street! Snow plowed in front of driveways and walks is a routine downside of the snow removal operation; it is not done on purpose.
- The City plows a certain predetermined number of sidewalks as soon as possible; however, it can take up to 2 days or longer to complete this work. However as a homeowner or resident you are responsible to do the sidewalk in front of your house.
- Driving during a winter storm should be avoided whenever possible. In every winter storm, there are times when road conditions are hazardous despite everyone's best effort. Cars stuck during snow storms impede our efforts to clear the streets of snow. Our work to restore safe road conditions is completed quicker and more efficiently when roads are free of traffic and illegally parked vehicles.



PROTECT YOUR VEHICLES DURING WINTER WEATHER

by Chief Chris Cotillo, Seat Pleasant Police Chief

We're coming into some of the coldest days of the season and as police officers we know exactly what that means: an increase in stolen cars.

As the chill of winter sets in every year, people tend to want to warm up their vehicles or leave them running unattended. This is a perfect target for car thieves, and it's against the law. In Maryland you can be ticketed for leaving your car running unattended. Unfortunately, if your vehicle is stolen, with the keys in the ignition, you may not be covered by your insurance. While this can happen at home as your car runs in your driveway, it's even more likely to take place when you're out running errands. We see far too many people who decide to leave their car running while they run into a convenience store, only to come back outside and find their vehicle stolen. Across the County officers have encountered car thieves hanging around convenience stores or gas stations just waiting for just that opportunity.

If you think locking your vehicle doors, while you leave it running, will protect it from theft, you're wrong. It only takes a few extra seconds for a thief to break out the window.

It may be uncomfortable to get into a cold car, but it's a lot more painful to have your car stolen or be written a ticket because you left it running unattended.

CODE ENFORCEMENT F.Y.I.

submitted by Tiara Andrews, Code Enforcement Officer

BULKY TRASH COLLECTION

All bulk trash is collected on Wednesday by appointment only. You must call Bates Trucking by 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday to be placed on the list. (Call 301-773-2069) You are only allowed three (3) large items. Residents please note if you don't call on Tuesday then you should not put any items out. If items are placed out and you're not on the pickup list you will likely be fined if they are left on the curb. All items for pickup should be placed out the night before. Any items that are placed out before dark the night before will receive a notice and are subject to a fine.

ACCUMULATION OF DEPOSITS - §129-4 B- It shall be unlawful for any person within the corporate limits of Seat Pleasant to cause or permit the open storage for any period of time any icebox, refrigerator, stove, glass, building materials, building rubbish or refuse, furniture or similar items or materials, irrespective of age or condition.

TREE ISSUES - Once tree limbs extend over into your property, you have a legal right to trim them back of your property at your expense. Neither the county nor the city has any codes on the books that states that we handle tree issues unless they are a public nuisance by the obstruction of the free passage on public ways or if the tree is diseased. Such obstruction includes, but is not limited to weeds, grass, bushes, other plants and trees.

RENTAL PROPERTIES - If you are renting your property out or if you are a renter please make sure that the owner of the property has a rental permit from the City of Seat Pleasant. There is an annual fee of \$100.00 for this permit. If anyone has any question regarding the process of obtaining a rental permit from the city please contact the code enforcement office at 301-499-8700. We will be happy to answer any of your questions.

FALSE ALARM REDUCTION UNIT - We have been receiving so many calls regarding the False Alarm Reduction Unit. The website that you can visit to get more information is http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/Government/PublicSafety/Police/false_alarm.asp

The Prince George's County Council passed the Burglar and Holdup Alarm Legislation, [Section 9-130 through 141](#) (PDF) of the county code, on July 1, 1996 to reduce the amount of false alarms. False alarms often cause unnecessary safety risks to emergency responders as well as citizens during a response. The Prince George's

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(CODE ENFORCEMENT CONTINUED)

Police Department responded to over 77,000 burglar and holdup alarms in past years. Over 98% of the alarms received were verified false. The Prince George's County Police, False Alarm Reduction Unit (FARU) has a goal to educate the public and reduce this amount. Reducing this number will free up resources needed by the Department in its Community Oriented Policing Program.

FARU duties include:

- ✦ Licensing alarm companies
 - ✦ Registering and renewing residential and non-residential alarm users
 - ✦ Sending notification of alarms and penalties
- Providing notifications of inspections and upgrade requirements for excessive false alarms and administering an appeal process.

FARU billing cycle:

begins May 1, ends April 30 each year

During this billing cycle, the alarm user may accrue 3 false alarms against their registration with no penalty. After the 3rd false alarm, **finances are accessed as follows:**

In addition to the fines:

- ✦ After the 6th false alarm, user is required to have their system inspected and re-certified by their alarm company. There is a \$25.00 fee for the inspection certificate. After the 12th false alarm, user is required to have their system upgraded. There is a \$50.00 fee for the upgrade certificate.

304.2 PROTECTIVE TREATMENT- All exterior surfaces, including, but not limited to, doors, door and window frames, cornices, porches, trim, balconies, decks and fences, shall be maintained in good condition. All metal surfaces subject to rust or corrosion shall be coated to inhibit such rust and corrosion, and all surfaces with rust or corrosion shall be stabilized and coated to inhibit future rust and corrosion.

**TIPS FOR USING SPACE HEATERS**

By Pamela Boone of CPAC

Keeping warm is something we all need during this cold season. Many of us use electric or kerosene portable heaters to heat up rooms in our house and they are usually safe as long as we follow instructions and use them sensibly. When we don't do these things, we increase the risk of fire which can not only destroy your property; it can also kill you and those you love. Take a few moments to think about these tips which will reduce or eliminate potential fire hazard:

- Use a space heater that has been tested to the latest safety standards and has been certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. These heaters have the most up-to-date safety features. Older space heaters may not meet newer safety standards. (How many of you have older heaters?) Always follow the manufacturer's directions for proper use.
- Place the heater on a level, hard nonflammable surface such as the floor so you can minimize the danger of it being knocked over. Don't put it on a countertop (unless is specifically designed for tabletop use).
- Keep the heater at least three feet away from bedding, drapes, furniture and other flammable materials.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- Turn the heater off if you leave the area or go to sleep.
- Don't place a space heater close to any sleeping person.
- Never use gasoline in a kerosene space heater, as even small amounts of gasoline mixed with kerosene can increase the risk of fire.

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- Don't use an extension cord.
- Don't use portable propane space heaters indoors or in any confined space unless they are specifically designed for indoor use.

Also, make sure you have working smoke alarms throughout your house and be sure to guard against carbon monoxide poisonings by installing carbon monoxide alarms.

Help us help you. If there's anything you'd like CPAC to discuss with the Seat Pleasant Police Department or Fire Department, please email us at cpac.seatpleasant@live.com.

Let's keep Seat Pleasant safe!

DANGER OF HOUSE FIRES

by Phil Martin of the Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Department

While the winter months always bring a spike in home fires, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) says home fire deaths reported on by the news media are above those reported at this time last year. According to media reports, home fires have already claimed 148 lives this month, 24 more than reported during Jan. 1-16, 2012.

Home fire incidence is collectively highest in the three winter months of January, February and March. Cooking and heating are the leading causes of these fires. The risk of fire also increases with the use of electric space heaters, fireplaces and wood stoves. Older adults (50 deaths) and children (28 deaths) have accounted for more than half of home fire deaths reported by the news media in January. Most of these tragedies remain under investigation but space heaters, candles and cooking are among the causes suspected in a number of these incidents. Whatever the cause of the fires, one thing is certain: all of these deaths were preventable. The USFA encourages everyone to take just 30 seconds to learn the essentials for staying fire-safe this winter by viewing their winter fire safety video at www.usfa.fema.gov. If you have further questions regarding fire safety in Seat Pleasant. Call the Community Outreach line at 301-836-1957.



DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM COMES TO SEAT PLEASANT



Are you interested in learning about how to prevent type 2 diabetes? Do you want to learn how to eat healthier and exercise more? Then you should come to the "Healthy Start" Program in Seat Pleasant! "Healthy Start" is an prevention program for people who have not been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, live in Seat Pleasant, and who are over 18. It will be held in the Seat Pleasant Activity Center on Saturdays from February 9th-March 9th at 11:00am-12:30pm. Those participants that attend four out of the five sessions will receive a \$20 gift card to an area grocery store. Please contact Connie Bell at 301-405-3181 if you are interested!

AARP TAX SERVICES RETURN TO SEAT PLEASANT

The City of Seat Pleasant will once again be a host site for AARP. Tax returns will be done free of charge for seniors and low to moderate income individuals. These services are by appointment only (NO DROP INS) every Wednesday starting February 6 and ending April 10. Appointments are on a first come first serve basis. Call 301-336-2600 if you are interested in making an appointment.



City of Seat Pleasant

"A City of Excellence"

6301 Addison Road

Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743



PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SOUTHERN MARYLAND
PERMIT #235

BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAM

Thursday, February 28th, 2013
7:00 p.m.



Seat Pleasant Activity
Center
5720 Addison Road
Seat Pleasant, Maryland